

HINTS - our experience

- Allowed a preliminary test of SSB theory, which contributed to our own focused field studies.
- Provided specific tested measures.
- Provided a standard for responses to some questions.
- Supported specific tests of theory.
- Provided background information about essential ethnic difference in media use. (interesting and a start point-Ramirez)

So how often is HINTS useful for theory?

- Cross-sectional, stand alone
 - Causal direction uncertain, most often
- What about the trend data? -
 - but response rate, and sample-make-up changes make this uncertain.
 - And trends not usually about theory, anyway.
- But, sometimes (if measures included)
 - can comment on a particular assumption of a theory
 - if (rarely) a theory has no problems with causal direction,
 - or if an in-study experiment can be mounted, and a theory can be tested with such a manipulation

So can HINTS be useful for theory?

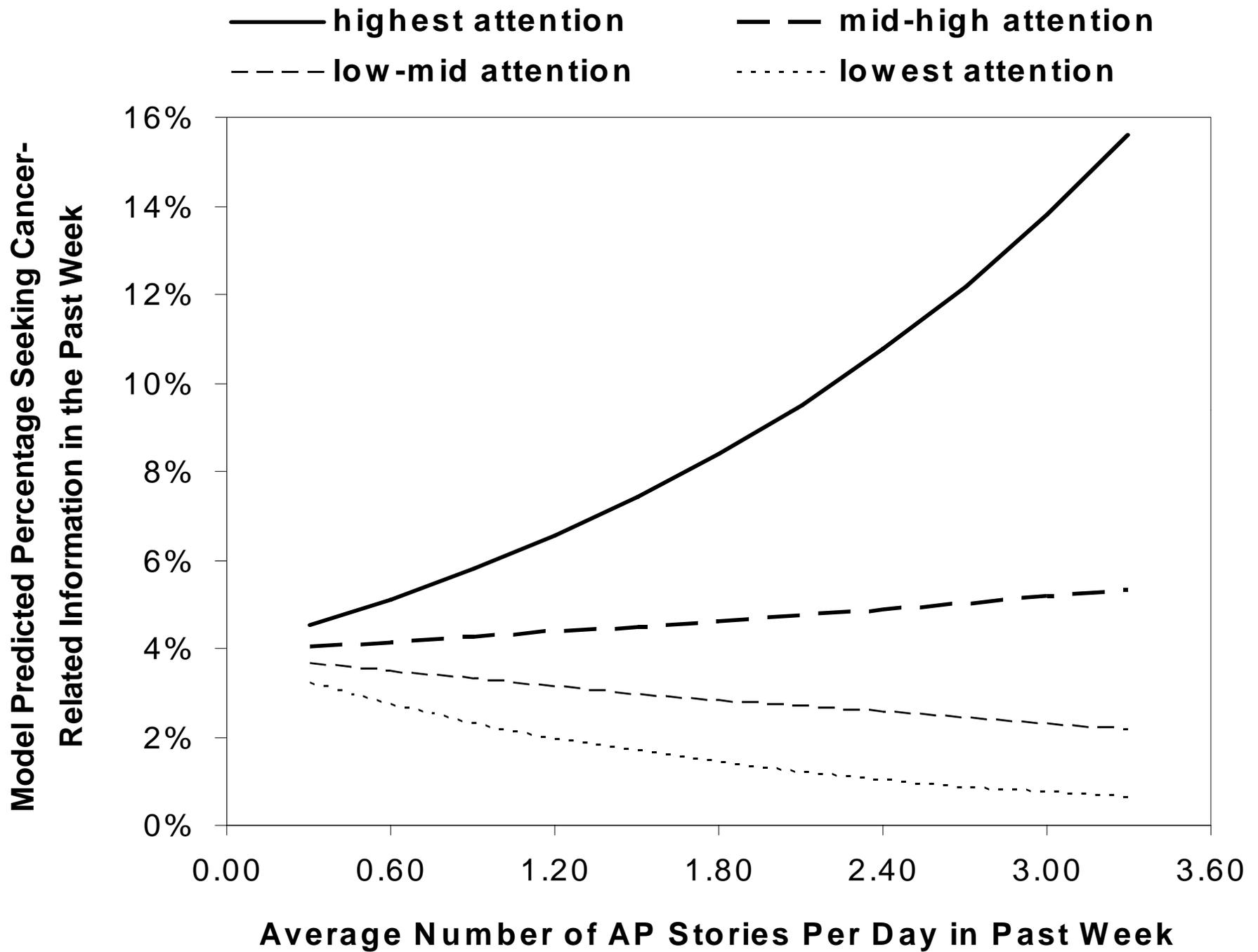
- Sometimes (if measures included)
 - can comment on a particular assumption of a theory
 - test a theory if it has no problems with causal direction (unusual)

Or?

Using cross-sectional data:

- Exploit within-study over time data collection
- Exploit HINTS in combination with external information.

(Niederdeppe study from HINTS 1 (also extended for HINTS 2))



Still, if you do want to test theory...

- Turn HINTS into a continuously fielded study to maximize ability to respond to external events
- Turn HINTS (partly) into a prospective study, and re-interview some portion of the sample again - to look at lagged effects.
- Turn HINTS into a small continuing core, and allow researchers to compete for space on the instrument for add on one time modules, allowing in study-experiments.